



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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of : Competitiveness Council on 25 and 26 September 2008

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Subject : Council conclusions on better careers and more mobility: a European partnership
for researchers

Delegations will find enclosed Council conclusions on better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers, as adopted by the Competitiveness Council at its meeting on 26 September 2008.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON
BETTER CAREERS AND MORE MOBILITY:
A EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP FOR RESEARCHERS**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING,

- Its Resolutions on the reinforcement of the mobility strategy within the ERA (10 December 2001)¹, on investing in research for European growth and competitiveness (22 September 2003)², on the profession and the career of researchers within the ERA (10 November 2003)³;
- The general principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (11 March 2005)⁴;
- Its conclusions on reinforcing human resources in science and technology in the European Research Area (18 April 2005)⁵;
- Its conclusions on the future of science and technology in Europe (23 November 2007)⁶;
- Its conclusions entitled "Family-Friendly Scientific Careers: towards an Integrated Model" (30 May 2008)⁷;
- Its conclusions on the launch of the Ljubljana Process – towards full realisation of ERA (30 May 2008)⁸;

¹ OJ C 367, 21.12.2001.

² OJ C 250, 18.10.2003.

³ OJ C 282, 25.11.2003.

⁴ OJ L 75, 22.3.2005.

⁵ 8194/05.

⁶ 14693/07.

⁷ 10212/08.

⁸ 10231/08.

- The European Council conclusions of 13 and 14 March 2008, launching the new cycle of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs (2008-2010) and inviting Member States and the European Union to remove barriers to the free movement of knowledge, in particular by making the labour market for European researchers more open and competitive, providing better career structures, transparency and family-friendliness;
1. REAFFIRMS the European Union's ambition to reinforce scientific and technological excellence and to have the best research talents available to it;
 2. RECALLS, in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy, and in a context of international competition, that the achievement of Europe's scientific and technological ambition requires the best researchers to be involved in the projects undertaken within the framework of the European Research Area (ERA), particularly as regards research financed through public funding. In order to achieve that objective, it is essential to create the necessary conditions so that female and male scientists, who are the key players in the construction of the ERA, are further motivated by a status which provides them with real social recognition and a satisfactory standard of living;
 3. RECALLS the essential role of policies supporting mobility, which must be suitably organised and enable the achievement of attractive and progressive scientific careers, guaranteeing, inter alia, the reconciliation of professional and private life;
 4. RECOGNISES efforts already undertaken by the Commission and Member States in improving the working conditions and mobility of young researchers and established researchers alike;

5. EMPHASISES the need to accelerate progress and to amplify the initiatives designed to strengthen the attractiveness of the European higher education area, of research and of scientific careers, as well as to strive to strengthen the links between the fields concerned by coordinating the Lisbon Strategy with the Bologna Process around the doctorate and the modernisation of higher education; NOTES also, in this context, the crucial importance of innovation and, consequently, the need for enhanced collaboration between the worlds of academic research and industry;
6. WELCOMES the communication from the Commission "Better careers and more mobility: A European partnership for researchers", which proposes that Member States endorse common and complementary objectives in the field of careers and mobility of researchers;
7. PROPOSES to set as a common overall objective for the partnership which is to be established between Member States, associated States and the Commission, improvement of the professional situation of researchers in Europe and increased mobility through an approach combining complementarity and consistency between national and Community levels;
8. CONSIDERS that the following priority lines of action proposed by the Commission are such as to constitute a good basis for the development and implementation at national level of any initiatives at national level that Member States consider appropriate:
 - systematic opening up of recruitment for researchers;
 - meeting the needs of mobile researchers with regard to social security and supplementary pensions;
 - improvement in work and employment conditions in order to make scientific careers more attractive;
 - improvement in the training, skills and experience of researchers;

9. RECOGNISES that:

- the partnership principle proposed by the Commission, which should be effective and balanced, and comply with the principle of subsidiarity, constitutes an appropriate approach for reinforcing coordination and cooperation at European level;
- the "Human Resources and Mobility" Steering Group, the mandate of which will have to be adapted, is the most appropriate forum for conducting this partnership in a flexible manner. CREST will have to be informed of the progress of this Group's work, particularly as regards the four priority lines of action;
- a balance must be found between opening up at European level and respect for the autonomy of research and higher education institutions;
- regarding social security coordination issues and supplementary pensions, relevant stakeholders in these areas will need to cooperate in the development of concrete solutions;

10. STRESSES the need to draw fully on the European legal framework already in force and, especially, to consider the opportunities offered by the Community rules on the coordination of social security schemes⁹, including exemptions under Article 17 of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71¹⁰ in the case of long-term expatriation; HIGHLIGHTS the possibilities for bilateral and multilateral agreements on social security between Member States and third countries;

⁹ Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 of 14 June 1971 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to members of their families moving within the Community and Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71, which will eventually be replaced by Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and its implementing Regulation, which is currently being finalised.

¹⁰ The exemptions under Article 17 of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 are carried over into Article 16 of the new Regulation (EC) No 883/2004.

11. INVITES Member States to continue and step up efforts to encourage the effective implementation, on a voluntary basis, of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and to pursue the implementation of the "scientific visa" Directive¹¹, except if they are not bound by it or subject to its application;

12. INVITES Member States:

- to implement the objectives of this partnership in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy and of the guidelines for growth and jobs (2008-2010), and in particular guideline No 7¹²;
- in consultation with stakeholders, to define national objectives and specific actions on the basis of the priority lines of action proposed by the Commission or any other appropriate actions; the priority actions implemented by Member States should reflect the specific situation of each Member State and constitute a coherent set of specific actions, existing, strengthened or and new, contributing to the common overall objectives and to national objectives, including, if necessary, actions adapting national laws;
- to report regularly on actions undertaken or envisaged, and for the first time by the end of 2009;
- to summarise the main objectives, measures and actions in their national reform programmes (2008-2010) and in annual reports within the Lisbon Strategy framework;

13. INVITES Member States and the Commission to

- define and use appropriate indicators for monitoring progress, at both national and Community level;

¹¹ Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research (OJ L 289, 3.11.2005, p. 15).

¹² 7280/08.

- involve relevant stakeholders (in particular researcher associations, employers of researchers, and funding agencies);
- strengthen mutual learning activities through information exchange, identification of best practices and, where appropriate, the use of peer-reviews;
- make full use of the existing tools¹³, while enhancing them where necessary;
- develop common guidelines where they can reinforce a consistent implementation of actions of common interest;
- study how best to implement certain priority lines of actions, including those concerning the portability of individual grants and the needs of mobile researchers in terms of supplementary pensions, in consultation with the appropriate bodies concerned;

14. INVITES the Commission, in consultation with Member States, to

- report annually on progress made;
- undertake a global assessment of actions and results of the partnership in 2010;
- adapt and strengthen Community action, notably within the "People" programme of the 7th Framework Programme, so as to respond better to the needs of researchers;

15. UNDERTAKES, in the context of strengthened governance of the ERA, resulting from the Ljubljana Process, to regularly discuss progress and provide the necessary guidelines.

¹³ Such as EURAXESS.